Who is the Pharaoh that drowned in the Red Sea?

by

Wayne Melloy Myhre

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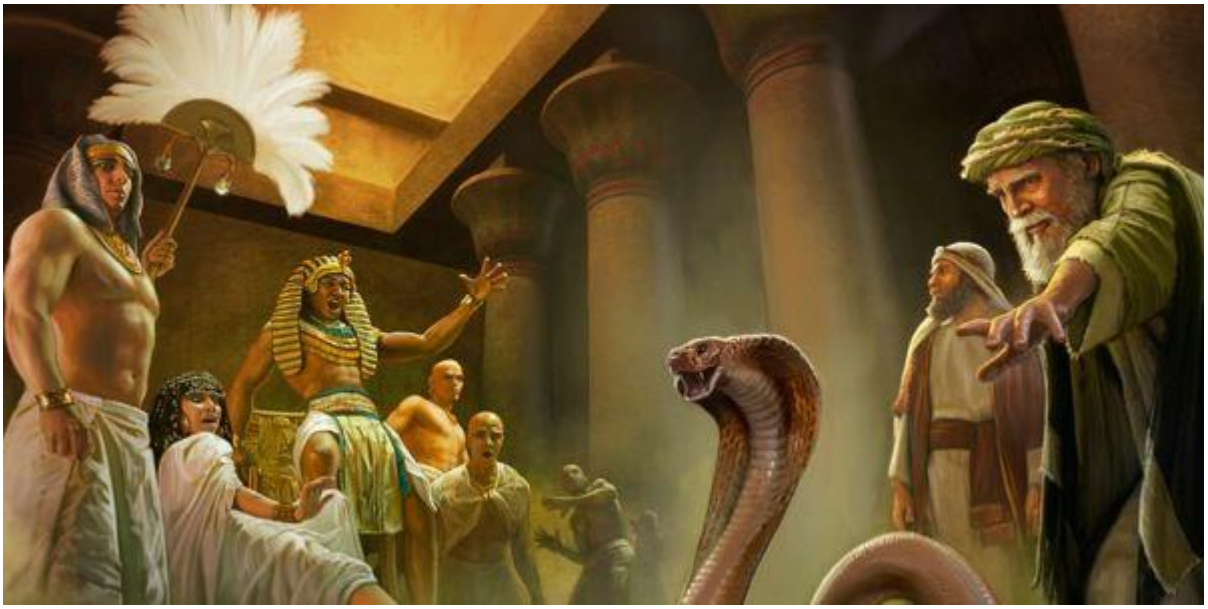
Who Was The Pharaoh Who Drowned in the Red Sea?

Who was the Pharaoh who chased the Israelites into the Red Sea? One can find more answers to this question than seemingly any other. Pharaohs spanning a thousand years of history are proposed, from 2200 BC to 1200 BC. The main source of evidence is the bible. Although there are no historical records extant except for the Bible's account, and though the bible's chronology can be added various ways, the bible does provide chronological limits, which eliminate a number of these proposed candidates, such as Rameses II, the Pharaoh usually depicted in the movies. Secondarily, we will note the archaeological evidence.

Before we tackle the question of the Pharaoh at the exodus, let us begin with the entrance of Israel into Egypt. Although the Pharaoh at the Exodus is unknown, the Pharaoh reigning at the entrance of Israel to Egypt must have been Egyptian, not a foreign king, as the Hyksos kings were. Archer says, "The reigning dynasty looks down on Semitic foreigners from Palestine and forbids them to eat at the same table with Egyptians (Gen 43:32: "The Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians"). But the Hyksos themselves had originally come down from Palestine into Egypt…Gen.46:34 states quite plainly, "For every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."[1]

But this could scarcely have been true of the Hyksos, who were so closely associated with sheep-herding in the recollection of the later Egyptians that they (like Manetho) construed the name "Hyksos" to mean "Shepherd kings."' We know now that a better translation of Hyksos would be "foreign kings."

Acts 7:18 states, "Till another king arose which knew not Joseph." (Ex.1:8) It can hardly be supposed that any Egyptian king would have been ignorant of the achievements of Joseph, but a foreign king could have. According to Egyptologists, the Hyksos reigned from 1675-1552 BC +-30 years(15th and 16th Egyptian dynasties)(many say 108 yrs).[2]



Barnes says, "The expressions in this verse are special and emphatic. “A new king” is a phrase not found elsewhere. It is understood by most commentators to imply that he did not succeed his predecessor in the natural order of descent and inheritance. He “arose up over Egypt,” occupying the land, as it would seem, on different terms from the king whose place he took, either by usurpation or conquest. The fact that he knew not Joseph implies a complete separation from the traditions of Lower Egypt." [3]

Corson says, “We know that the Hyksos built massive defensive works, all out of brick. Later Egyptian writers claim that they were rapacious and cruel…sometime in the first third of the 16th century, i.e. around 1580 BC, the Hyksos hegemony began to fail…Pharaoh Ahmose ultimately pressed them from Egypt sometime near the middle of the 16th century…The Hyksos changed from a power growing in wealth and dominion, to a faction, embattled, defensive, and in retreat. This change was quite abrupt.”[4] Pharaoh Ahmos united Egypt bringing in a whole new dynasty.

After Ahmose took Avaris, the Hyksos capital, the next 50 years sees an absence of a servile community of aliens in Egypt. Donald Redford states, “The 50 years following the expulsion of the Hyksos, roughly the 2nd half of the16th century BC-comprise a major period of transition in the history of Western Asia.”[5]

According to the proposed timeline herein, the pharaoh of the Exodus would have been a Hyksos ruler (probably the last one), and after Pharaoh and his army drowning in the Red sea, we would expect the soon demise of their power in Egypt.

Makrizi, a historian of Egypt c.1400AD, said, “It is one day’s journey (in a straight line) from the Sea of Kolzoum (the Gulf of Suez), the shore of which is there called the shore of the sea of Faran. There it was that Pharaoh was drowned by the Almighty.”[6] The Egyptian priest, Manetho, wrote a history of Egypt, and although no copies survive, we have extracts from Josephus, Africanus, and Eusebius. Josephus, quoting Manetho, says that after a siege of Avaris (the site later called Raamses) by Thummosis (or Tethmosis: a corrupt form of Ahmos), king of Egypt, the Hyksos peacefully left Egypt en-masse, settled in a country now called Judea, and built the city of Jerusalem “not fewer than 240,000 and took their journey from Egypt through the wilderness.”[6]

We know from the account of Melchizedek in Abram's day (Gen.14:18), that Jerusalem, or Salem, as it was known early on, existed long before this. And though the Jews attacked Jebus (as Jerusalem was called then) when they entered Canaan, they did not conquer the center of it, Zion, until David's day. Joshua 10:5;15:63; Judges 1:8,21; 2 Sam.5:7. 'As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.'- Josh.15:63. 'And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites…David took the strong hold of Zion' -2Sa 5:6

Waddell adds, "In point of historical fact, the victorious king was Ahmos, and he took Avaris by main force; the genuine Manetho must surely have given this name, which is preserved by Africanus and Eusebius as also by Apion..."[7] Obviously, Josephus equates the Hyksos expulsion from Egypt with the exodus of Israel**.** Perhaps **Manetho melded the two events also, thus accounting for the mass exodus from Egypt without giving glory to the despised Jews**.

Kiel states, "If we add to this the unquestionably legendary character of the Manetho accounts, there is always the greatest probability in the views of those inquirers who regard the two accounts given by Manetho, concerning the Hyksos, as two different forms of one and the same legend, and the historical fact upon which this legend was founded as being the 430 years sojourn of the Israelites, which had been thoroughly distorted in the national interests of Egypt."

He further comments, " 'There arose a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph.'…A new king…is a king who follows different principles of government from his predecessors….That this king belonged to a new dynasty, as the majority of commentators follow Josephus in assuming, cannot be inferred with certainty from the predicate *new*; but it is very probable, as furnishing the readiest explanation of the change in the principles of government."[8]

Time goes by, and as Ex.1:7-8 states, "and the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph."

The king who didn't know Joseph was "the same" king ruling when Moses was born according to Acts 7:18-20: "Till another king arose who knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end that they might not live. In which time, Moses was born…" The exodus occurred 80 years after Moses' birth and their demise would be expected shortly after the exodus; thus this dynasty was likely about a century (c.108 yrs), matching only one in Egyptian history: that of the Hyksos.

Joseph would have been legendary among the Egyptians, and any Egyptian prince would have been taught this from childhood, but the later Hyksos pharaohs would not have known of him. This verse may imply that the oppression was limited to the time of the Hyksos, who ruled a little over a century until Ahmos expelled them from Egypt, beginning what is now called the New Kingdom. If so, their rule would have been very close to an end with Pharaoh and his army destroyed and their main workforce exiting from Egypt.

Courville states, "The real problem here is not whether the Egyptians recorded the incident or whether or not such inscriptions have been found. The real question is whether the Exodus as recorded in scripture could have occurred without leaving an unmistakable crises in Egypt which could not under any circumstances be concealed from future generations."[9]

Ricardo states, "Moreover, the types of royal inscriptions found on stelae and temples never include any negative reports about Pharaoh and his armies. Rather, they speak of his triumphs and deeds of valor, and even distort set-backs such as the near disaster to Ramesses II's army at the battle of Kadesh, about which we know from other sources.
Consequently, no one will ever find a stela commemorating the humiliation of Pharaoh as a result of the plagues or the defeat of the Egyptian forces dispatched to bring the fleeing Hebrews back to Egypt." [10]

Vandeer adds, "If the number of immigrants were nearly 2,000,000 which is a legitimate deduction from Ex.12:37, the movement was one which would have shaken Egypt to its very foundation, and which, even if it had failed to be recorded in one of the numerous monuments which have survived in Egypt would at any rate have left some unmistakable impression on Egyptian history."[11]

Josephus, in about 100 AD, says that the Pharaoh who drove the Hyksos out of Egypt was called Tethmosis, and adds that "Lysimachus says it was under king Bocchoris, that is, 1700 years ago."[12] (c. 1600 BC)

The early Christian historian Julius Africanus (c.220 AD) says that Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt "in the days of" a Theban king, "Ahmos." [13](18th dynasty, c. 1570-1546 BC). The Theban king Kamos is said to have begun fighting the Hyksos in the late 1570's. Ahmos, his brother, is said to have been the king who finally expelled the Hyksos out of Egypt, after a lengthy siege of Avaris, in about 1567 BC (this date is variously stated from 1570-1536 BC). We know they fled to Sharuhen, not Jerusalem, as Manetho incorrectly states.

A tomb inscription by one of King Ahmos' soldiers, Ahmos, son of Ibana, states: "*Then Avaris was despoiled, and I brought spoil from there; one man, three women; total, four persons. His majesty gave them to me as slaves. Then Sharuhen was besieged for three years. His majesty despoiled it."*[14] Shurahen is thought to be in the area of Gaza 20 miles from the NE border of Egypt. So if this is just after the exodus of Israel from Egypt, that means some of the former Egyptians (Hyksos) who had Hebrew slaves in Egypt became themselves slaves of Theban commanders in Egypt.

As to the time of the Exodus, most conservative bible-based chronologies have it in the 18th dynasty at 1446 BC. However, this date is based on one disputed verse. I am referring to 1 Kings 6:1. It should be noted that this account of Solomon beginning to build the temple is a parallel account. I Kings 6:1 is parallel with 2 Chron. 3:2. **If the first half of I K. 6:1 were genuine, one would expect such an important statement like the length of time from the Exodus til then to be in the parallel account too.** But 2 Chron 3:2 just reads similar to I K.6:1b (without any mention of this era): "And he began to build in the 2nd day of the 2nd month in the 4th year of his reign."

1 Kings 6:1b reads, "...in the 4th year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the 2nd month, that he began to build the house of the Lord."Also, it interesting that the completion of the temple is worded thus: "In the 4th year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid, in the month Zif. And in the 11th year, in the month Bul, which is the 8th month, was the house finished..."vs 37-38.

Theile believes, “It is likewise clear that in connection with later editorial work on the involved chronological data, misunderstanding could and did take place. Such we have noted in 2 Chron.15:19 & 16:1, in 2 Kings 8:16 & 14:21, in the order and sequence the reigns were placed in 2 Kings 15:23-38; and in the synchronisms of 2 Kings 17:1 and 18:1,9,10.[15]

AMENOTEP II

RAMSES II

Scholars in the past have thought that this clause to be a late interpolation. If an interpolation, the years must be determined by studying the Judges period in detail. 1 Kings 6:1 has been suggested to be a late interpolation. Rawlinson states, "It is not the **manner** of Old Testament writers thus to date events from an era, an idea which appears to have first occurred to the Greeks **temp.** Thucydides (writing in 411BC)." [17]

Origen (c.230 AD) though not quoting, talks of this verse without mentioning the first half, but does say, with no justification, that the time from the exodus to the temple was 340 years).[16] It has been noted that 480 is 16 x 30, and may stand for the 16 generations from Moses to David, listed in 1 Chron. 15:16,19, at 30 years each.

Josephus, in about 100 AD, says that the Pharaoh who drove the Hyksos out of Egypt was called Tethmosis, and adds that “Lysimachus says it was under king Bocchoris, that is, 1700 years ago”[18] (c. 1600 BC). Later, he adds 'Now the number of years during the rule of these 13 (high priests) from the days when our fathers departed out of Egypt, under Moses their leader, until the building of that temple which king Solomon erected at Jerusalem was 612 years'- Ant.20.10.1. Assuming he is referring to the 1 Kings 6:1 period of time, Exodus to the start of the temple, and using the current date for the temple -966 BC; this puts the exodus at 1578 BC. If the 11 years construction finishing the temple is what he meant, that would be 1567 BC.

THUTMOS II THUTMOSE III

The early Christian historian Julius Africanus (c.220 AD) says that Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt "in the days of Ahmos". [19](18th dynasty, c. 1570-1546 BC). Ahmos was the Theban king who ruled southern Egypt until he drove the Northern Hyksos king out; thus unifying Egypt. The prevailing 21st century bible-based chronology makes the Pharaoh of the Exodus an 18th dynasty ruler. But these rulers are well attested historically, and it is certain no nation changing event like the loss of their entire slave work force (600,000 men plus women and children), their entire army drowned, their gold given away, their cattle dead, and crops wiped out etc. happened in their reigns (Ex.9:6,26;10:5).

Those who believe in a 15th century or later Exodus commonly make the Pharaoh either Thutmose II or III, Amenhotep II, or Ramses II, but they could not have drowned in the Red Sea; they were mummified and their remains still with us as we can all see.

Some say that Pharaoh watched from the shore, and was not destroyed with his armies as they drove though the dry sea bed, but numerous inscriptions tell us that the Pharaohs *led* their troops into battle, and the bible's account confirms this.

The Pharaoh of the Exodus drowned in the Red Sea: "For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea…and the waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left." (Ex. 15:19, Ps. 106:11). Ps. 136:15 states, "But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea," The Good News translation reads: "But He drowned the king of Egypt with his army."[20] Commenting on Ex.15:19, Keil states, "In the words, "*Pharaoh's horse, with his chariots and horsemen,*" Pharaoh, riding upon his horse as the leader of the army, is placed at the head of the enemies destroyed by Jehovah."[21] Ex.14:18 states, "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD when I have gotten Me honor *upon Pharaoh*, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen."

Many commentators and translations want Pharaoh to have survived the Red Sea incident, and so comment and translate accordingly. For example, In Ex. 15 19, the word "horse," Hebrew: "sus," is masculine singular, but many translations translate sus here: "horses" plural; thus not saying that Pharaoh's specific horse went into the sea; though the MSS say it did. Even if "Horses" were a possible rendering of sus here, Psalm 106:11 makes it crystal clear: "There was not one of them left."

We have all the mummies of the Pharoahs from the time periods usually associated with the Exodus, so we should be looking elsewhere in time for this Pharaoh. We have the mummified

bodies (even their faces are discernable) of these Pharaohs, Thutmose II & III, Amenhotep II, and Ramses II for all to see. We also have Ahmos' body found at Deir el Bahri, in 1881.

Courville says, "This anomaly is only the beginning of difficulties. According to Scripture, the Pharaoh of the Exodus had his palace in the Delta region, not far removed from the laboring Israelites. This situation had existed from the time of Moses' birth as evidenced by the finding of the child Moses in the bulrushes by the king's daughter. Thutmose III and his successors all had their capitals, and of necessity their palaces, far to the south of the Delta at Thebes…
While Thutmose III did extensive building, this construction was not in brick as stated of the building by the Israelites under slavery. The use of brick had long since been replaced by stone from quarries along the Nile river. Nor was his building program in the Eastern delta region where the cities of Pi-Thom and Pi Rameses have been located. It is certain that neither Thutmose III nor Amenhotep II nor any of the kings of Dynasty XVIII had anything to do with the construction of these cities."[22]

Ken Doig adds: "With the revival of building after the Hyksos era, stone replaced brick almost entirely. The notable exception was in the building program of Ramses II."[23]Also, from Egyptian maps, there are cities listed which seem to indicate that the Israelites already were settled in Canaan when Thutmose III fought there about 1480 BC.

This also touches on a bible difficulty, which should be mentioned. Those who disregard the chronological data of scripture usually argue for a much later Exodus during the reign of Ramses II (Mid 1200's BC). One of the major scriptural arguments they use is based on the use of the name, "Raamses" (also spelled, "Rameses," "Ramsees," and "Ramses"), for one of the treasure cities the Israelites built while slaves in Egypt, and also the "land of Rameses" (in Goshen) where Israel settled (Gen. 47:4,11).

But this Ramses II argument is groundless; as Corson says, "Ramses II built throughout the delta, refurbishing many cities that already had ancient histories. One may have already borne the name of Ramses, as did a district in the Delta, but even if he was the first to so name the city, the Hebrews could have built it 500 years earlier."[24]

Gill adds "the names are differently pointed and pronounced; that built by the Israelites is Raamses, and was one of the treasure cities of Pharaoh, and never inhabited by the Israelites."[25] The city of Raamses was in the area that was once the late capital of the Hyksos, Avaris (Their early capital was Tanis).

Avaris was possibly renamed in honor of an earlier Ramses (many Pharaohs had this title) who is thought to have been born in Avaris. Charles Aling says of the city of Raamses, "In dynasty 18, ca 1570-1325 BC, little or no major work went on there. It seems certain that the Hebrews worked at Raamses during the Hyksos period." [26]

Rohl adds, "Pi-Ramsesse was itself founded in the early 17th dynasty, but texts from that dynasty refer to the South quarter of the Ramesside city as Avaris, confirming that the much older SIP city was later incorporated into the new city of Ramesses."[27]

Also, the discovery of the Merneptah Stele should put the Ramses II theory to rest. It contains hieroglyphic text, dated about 1230 BC, which describes the victories of Pharaoh Merneptah (who reigned just after Ramses II in that century), and has the Israelites as a people already settled in Canaan then.[28]

Further, there may have been other Pharaohs with the name "Raamses" (note variety of spellings). Ussher, citing Manetho (1:103), has 2 other Pharaohs named Ramsees *in his chronology*, one reigning 1 year in 1578 BC and another "Ramsees Miamun" reigning 1577-1511.[29]

Wolf comments, "Whereas it is true that Rameses II was a prodigious builder, it is not at all certain that the city mentioned in Ex.1:11 bore his name at first. In ch.1 and 2, it appears that Moses had not been born until after Rameses was built, and yet he was 80 years old at the time of the Exodus. The same problem exists with the appearance of "Rameses" in Gen. 47:11 hundreds of years before the reign of Rameses II.

Apparently in both cases, earlier names were updated by a later editor who used the more recent name. Such a proleptic use also appears in Gen.14:14 where Abraham pursued the captors of Lot as far as Dan. But the name of the city was "Lasish" until the tribe of Dan captured and renamed it in the days of the judges (Jud.18:29)."[30] As Judges 18 says, "And they called the name of the city 'Dan' ...howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first."

Another early piece of evidence that Israel was settled in the land early is the Berlin Pedestal. ABR states, "The Berlin Pedestal is an Egyptian inscription housed in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin that almost certainly refers to Israel as a nation in Canaan. The inscription has three name rings, two of which clearly read "Ashkelon" and "Canaan," and the third of which has been reconstructed to read "Ishrael."
In a recent reexamination of the inscription, Peter van der Veen, Christoffer Theis, and Manfred Gorg noted that the names "Ashkelon" and "Canaan" largely were written consonantally and better reflect examples from the reigns of Tuthmosis III and Amenhotep II (15th century BC) than those from the times of Rameses II and Merneptah (13th century BC). If they were already settled in Canaan in the reigns of these kings, we should be looking for an earlier 16th c.BC Pharaoh.[31]
G. Archer states, "It is quite obvious that the Pharaoh from whom Moses had to flee after his slaying of the Egyptian taskmaster, remained on the throne until near the close of Moses' forty year sojourn in Midian; for Exodus 4:19 reports Yahweh as saying to Moses, "Go return to Egypt; for all the men are dead which sought your life."'[32]

Therefore, the Pharaoh of the Exodus would likely have been an immediate successor to a Pharaoh with a 40 plus year reign, but with a very short reign himself (and possibly without an heir as his firstborn was dead).

As for the last 3 kings at this time, one timeline has the Hyksos king Apophis 43 yrs, followed by Khamudi 10 years, ending at the fall of Avaris. Vilis has Ahmose (ruling first over just southern Egypt), the Theban Egyptian king, c.1577-1552; who in c.1559 destroys Avaris and drives the Hyksos out, unifying Egypt and starting a whole new dynasty.[33] Ryholt though has proposed that Khamudi's reign must have been short, amounting to no more than a year.
He also adds, "Ahmose would have conquered Avaris by the 18th or 19th year of his reign at the very latest. This is suggested by "a graffito in the quarry at Tura whereby 'oxen from Canaan' were used at the opening of the quarry in Ahmose's regnal year 22. Since the cattle would probably have been imported after Ahmose's siege of the town of Sharuhen which followed the fall of Avaris, this means that the reign of Khamudi must have terminated by Year 18 or 19 of Ahmose's 25 year reign at the very latest."[34] If this short reign be true, the Pharaoh of the Exodus was likely Khamudi.

Although the length of the seige of Avaris is unknown, he seems,from the account of Ahmos of Ibana, to have taken about 2 or 3 years to conquer Avaris. This probably means that the Exodus of Israel, which resulted in the destruction of the pursuing army, probably occurred 2 or 3 years earlier, as Ahmos would have wasted no time in attacking his suddenly vulnerable enemies, the Hyksos, at their capitol, Avaris.

Ancient Egypt:

> Although the history of Egypt as recorded by the priest, Manetho, goes way back, we should expect that the history of the oldest nations would properly begin with the dispersion from Babel. Egypt, which was founded by Menes (secular sources say *united by Menes),* would be dated about 2450-2600 BC by any of the timelines proposed herein. Mizraim, Ham's son, is identified by some as Menes, the first actual king of Egypt; and Mizraim certainly would have been a prominent person at the time of dispersion.

Mackey states: "If Dr. Albright was correct in his view that the Egyptian *Manium* (or *Mannu*), against whom the Akkadian potentate Naram-Sin (c. 2200 BC conventional dating) successfully waged war, was none other than the legendary first pharaoh Menes, himself, then that must lead to the shocking conclusion that the beginning of the Egyptian dynastic history (c. 3100 BC conventional dating) is a millennium out of whack with Akkadian history."[35] We know from any biblical reckoning that the conventional dating for the beginning of Egypt with king Menes (3100 BC) is off. Menes was one of Ham's sons born after the flood. He was contemporary with Nimrod. Nimrod founded Babylon and Menes founded Egypt.
The start of their kingdoms would likely be the date of the Dispersion from Babel. The Greek Astronomer, Eratosthenes (c.200 BC), numbers 38 Egyptian kings from Thebes, beginning with Menes, and reigning from 2600 BC to 1524 BC[36]

> But note how well this conventionally dated war between Manium and Naram-sin fits with these timelines. Menes was born to Ham likely either in Arphaxad's generation beginning just after the flood (Arphaxad-2 years after), or the next ones, Salah and Eber, until Peleg's birth and the dispersion from Babel a century after Noah's flood. Each father to son generation then averaged 32 years. People lived an ave. of 412 years between the flood and Babel. If Menes was born to Ham 35 years after the flood, and the flood was in 2636 BC; this c. 2200 BC date could fit in Menes' lifetime.

The Merneptah Stele is another piece of evidence we have of early Israelite history. It is good evidence for Ramses II not being the Pharaoh of the Exodus. It was made at the time that Ramses' son, Merneptah, was Pharaoh (his 5th year) and lists Israel as already a settled people in Canaan.

The Merneptah stone also is a particular example of falsely recorded history. This exquisite piece of black granite with a detailed carving of King Merneptah's (son of Ramses II) victory over Syria, Libya, and Israel is dated at about 1220 BC.[37] He records as having wiped out every last seed of Israel "Israel is laid waste; his seed is not." Not only was the Jewish nation not destroyed, but no record of this event is anywhere even mentioned in scripture. Some "point out that the Merneptah Stela's sole purpose was to aggrandize the military campaign of this king, and thus should not be considered as historically accurate."[38] Meyers states, "From Egyptian topographical lists, there are cities listed which seem to indicate that the Jews are already in Canaan when Thutmose 111 campaigned there around 1480 BC. .

Hoffmeier does an excellent job of comparing the annal of Thutmose III with Joshua 1-11 (1994,165-179; cf. Hess 1996, 160-170; 1994, 191-205; Younger 1990). There are many Old Testament names that are recognized in these lists, but there are two important place-names that effect this study. The first is number 78, Joseph-El, which indicates the tribe of Joseph was already in Canaan before 1481 BC (Redford 1979, 277) which is the 23rd year of Thutmose's co-regency (ANET 1969, 235). The second is number 102, Jacob-El, which also indicates the tribes of Israel were already in Canaan at this time. A date earlier than 1481 BC is needed for the Exodus.

In the temple of Amon in Soleb (Nubia) there is a topographical list from the time of Amenhotep III (1408-1372 BC) That gives the name "Yahweh of the land of the Shasu" (Giveon 1964, 244; Redford 1992, 272; Astour 1979, 17-34). In the ancient Near East a divine name was also given to a geographical place where the god was worshiped (Axelsson 1987, 60). This is the first clear extra-biblical evidence of the name Yahweh. Also named are "Asher" and "Joseph-El"which indicates that the Hebrews were in Canaan at this time."[39]

Jericho:

Dating the destruction of Jericho by Joshua also dates Israel's exodus from Egypt. So as with the exodus, Archaeologists date the destruction of Jericho from 13th to 16th c BC. This wide range is indicative more of individual predispositions to certain dates than "the concrete evidence of sherds and stones"as Jesse Long stated. "A conquest of Canaan works well with what is known about the end of the Middle Bronze Age.(1550BC). The cities of the land were fortified with high walls at this time, but in the next period, Late Bronze I, they were for the most part meagre sites with little or no fortification. It is conceivable that the Israelite conquest was instrumental in bringing Middle Bronze culture to an end."[40]

Famed Archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon, from her meticulous work at Jericho (1952-1958), has Jericho destroyed about 1550 BC, which would place the Exodus about 1590 BC. She placed the destruction level at 1550 BC, "contended that there was no fortified city in 1400 BC for Joshua's army to conquer, and that the archaeological evidence does not agree with the biblical description of a large-scale military incursion contemporary with the destruction of Jericho."(at 1406BC, that is) ABR states, " Her statements had a major impact on the scholarly world. Many hailed her findings as proof that the Bible was historically unreliable, that it couldn't be trusted. The only logical conclusion, agreed the scholars, was that its supposed historical annals were but myth fabricated much later in Israel's history. This became the accepted reality, entrenched in archaeological and academic circles."[41] It's so ironic. The bible believing scholars denounced her dates, and her evidence; while both she and the rest of the world thought they had proven the bible account a fairy tale. That's all because bible scholars had agreed on a certain date for Jericho,1406BC; and finding fault with their chronology, secular scholars (unfamiliar with the study of bible chronology) immediately dismissed the bible's history as myth. And the bible scholars helped them by taking a stand on a certain date for Jericho which couldn't stand up to scrutiny

(they still do). As bible believers, we need to take a stand on some eternal things, but we should be open to differing bible interpretations of minor things, like dating historical events.

Corson adds, "Dame Kenyon found that Jericho probably enjoyed its peak in the later 17th century BC. It had its most massive walls and defenses from this time…But at the end of MB II (c.1550 BC), the walls above the embankment were wholly destroyed and all of Jericho was burned. Objections to Kenyon's work have usually centered on minor details which in themselves cannot and certainly do not dismiss her overall conclusions."[42] Stephen Meyers states, "Recent scientific radiocarbon dating of cereal grains from Tell Es-Sultan (Jericho) place the end of the Middle Bronze Age (MB-IIC) around 1540 BC.[43]

In analyzing 18 samples from Kenyon's excavations in 1995, Bruins and van der Plicht get four calibration curves. This produced two date ranges for the samples: 1601-1566 BC or 1561-1524 BC.[44] After these walls fell, Perry adds, "The Jericho site was left bare for hundreds of years, so that there was large scale erosion."[45]

I mention Kenyon because her conclusions are based not only on the absence of a particular form of pottery (in her excavations) which was common at 1406 BC, and was later found there, but that there was only one *fortified* wall (c.1560 BC) found there; the earlier walls (c. 2000 BC) were mud brick construction and their destruction is attributed to likely earthquake activity. Callaway says, "The houses destroyed in about 1560 BC were not reoccupied"[46]
1Ki 16:34 states that Jericho was not rebuilt until the 9th c.BC. "In his (Ahab's) days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho." Ahab reigned 874-853 BC.

Also, critics say her date must be wrong, because they found more recent amulets found in graves north of the city. Archaeologist John Garstang discovered several scarabs and a seal in a cemetery near Jericho. Pictured (from left to right): a scarab of Hatshepsut (c. 1503-1483 BC), a scarab of Thutmose III (c. 1504-1450 BC), reverse side of a seal of Thutmose III, and scarab of Amenhotep III (c. 1386-1349 BC). S.Horn says, 'Collectively they demonstrate that the city's cemetery was in active use during the time that Kenyon believed that Jericho was abandoned.' [47]

There are two amulets of Amenhotep III and date from 1386 to 1349 BC (AIII period). This AIII period only existed 1300-1400 BC. That doesn't work with 1406BC either, the date most bible believing archaeologists use for Jericho. To answer this objection, some have redated Amenhotep III's reign to have begun before 1406BC. (1412-1375 BC).

So why were the scarabs only found in the graveyard outside of the city? It has been countered: 'The two A III scarabs could have been placed in the cemetery by survivors who continued to make use of the cemetery after Jericho was destroyed'.[48] Others have added that this cemetery was in constant use even after Jericho's demise. If this is true, it could explain all these scarabs from Thutmose to Amenhotep, which were found only in the cemetery.

What about the pottery?

'He (Garstang) had unearthed numerous examples of a locally made, imitation bichrome "Cypriot" pottery from the destruction layer of the final Canaanite city of Jericho.
Garstang called it "red ware" and several of the pieces he published have classic Cypriot bichrome motifs. Locally made imitation bichrome pottery came into use in the Late Bronze IB period 1550-1400 B.C. and was no longer made after 1400 B.C in the Late Bronze IIA.' [49]

But this date range has too much wiggle room to help us here. Popular pottery expert, Bryant Wood, purports to narrow this range to only the 15thc, and some of it, bowls with concentric circles, to only the latter part of that. He does make a pertinent statement regarding the graveyard. "Tomb groups are isolated deposits which cannot be placed in a chronological sequence as can stratified tell deposits. Moreover, tombs were often used for long periods of time; the material in them is mixed and represents a wide chronological spectrum. Stratified tell material should be given preference over tomb material, rather than the reverse."[50]

Bienkowski counters Wood's pottery dates: "Wood illustrates five vessels, which he claims are Late Bronze I, not Middle Bronze II. His argument is flawed in three ways: 1. Wood illustrates forms that have a long life and that are not particularly diagnostic of either the Middle or Late Bronze Age. Middle Bronze II parallels for most of these forms can be found at Gibeon, which is fairly close to Jericho and thus has a similar pottery repertoire. He cites parallels for only two forms, from Hazor in the north of Palestine and Ashdod on the coast. His attempt to achieve a precise dating by parallels from such a distance is unconvincing. There is no reason to doubt the Middle Bronze dating of this pottery…

3.Wood uses only published parallels to support his chronological conclusions. However, recent research has shown that during the Late Bronze Age there was a technological change in the production of pottery. There is growing evidence of the abandonment of the fast potter's wheel, for example at Tell Deir 'Alla, the Baq'ah Valley and, indeed, Jericho.
Although drawings of some of these Late Bronze Age handmade and slow-wheel-finished forms appear similar to Middle Bronze Age forms in manufacture, weight and feel," they are quite different. The pottery Wood cites from Jericho is entirely fast-wheel made and dates to Middle Bronze II." [51]

The problem is that the set dates for the fall of Jericho only reflect the biases of the scholars involved. As Prov. 18:17 says,"The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him." The bible believing archaeologist puts a date on it lining up with his view of the bible's chronology, popularly 1406 BC, relying on 1 Kings 6:1; a questionable verse. However, there are other dates bible chronologists deduce for Jericho, based solely on scripture (1406 is popular now, 1451 use to be popular, and some now propose a 16th c BC date as I do); and others primarily focus on C14 or pottery which usually have such a wide range of dates as to be only a general indicator of the date. However, it must be said that "the inherent imprecision of archaeology disqualifies it from dogmatic judgments on the historical integrity of the biblical text."[52] And as we have demonstrated from the bible's chronology, a date of c. 1530-1540BC for Jericho works well. For what it's worth, organic material from the ruins of Jericho has been carbon dated to 1550 BC.[53]

The Armana Letters

These are cuneiform documents found at el-Amarna. Six of these are letters from the governor of Jerusalem, Abdi-Heba, to either Pharaoh Amenhotep III (c. 1408/1390-1372/1352 BC) or his successor, Akhenaten (1352-1358 BC). They appeal to the Pharaoh for military assistance against Apiru invaders. Many think that they describe the time of the conquest under Joshua and Caleb.

If so, this would be consistent with a mid 1400's Exodus and 480 years for 1 Kings 6:1. "Lost are the lands of the king…lost are all the mayors…the Apiru has plundered all the lands of the king. If there are archers this year the lands of the king, my lord, will remain." -letter 286. "Consider Jerusalem. This, neither my father nor my mother gave to me. The strong hand, the arm of the king gave it to me. Consider the deed. This is the deed of Milkilu and the deed of the sons of Lab'ayu, who have given the land of the king to the Apiru." -letter 287.

"I am treated like an Apiru, and I do not visit the king, my lord, since I am at war. I am situated like a ship in the midst of the sea. The strong hand of the king took the land of Nahrima and the land of Kasi, but now the Apiru have taken the very cities of the king. Not a single mayor remains to the king, my lord, all are lost. Behold, Turbazu was slain in the city gate of Silu. The king did nothing.

Behold, servants who were joined to the Apiru smote Zimredda of Lakisu and Yapih-Hadda was slain in the city gate of Silu…If there are no archers this year, all the lands of the king, my lord, are lost." -letter 288.[54]

Thomas comments, "Habiru (in Egyptian, Apiru), was a derogatory name given at this time to nomadic and seminomadic invaders- Semites and non-Semites- infiltrating into Palestine from the north. The OT name, Hebrew, used for the Israelites (only rarely and chiefly by foreigners), may be derived from it, but Habiru is not primarily an ethnic term, as it was used in Mesopotamia of loosely organized and unorganized immigrants for centuries before it reached Palestine and Egypt.[55]

Joshua had killed the king of Jerusalem, Adoni-zedek, in his initial 7-year conquest of the land (Josh. 10:1-26), but Jerusalem (the Jebusites) was not captured until shortly after Joshua's death. (Josh 15:63, Jud. 1:1,8). This capture would have been about 25 years into the conquest period; about 1380 BC according to the mid 1400's Exodus model. Amenhotep III would have been pharaoh in 1380 BC if the current knowledge of Egyptian chronology is valid.

Could this be evidence that Jerusalem was still in the hands of the Canaanites at this time? Jerusalem was called Jerusalem (city of Salem) from at least the 18th c. BC according to Egyptian hieroglyphics, and earlier in Abram's day, we read of Melchizadek, king of Salem (Gen.14:18).

When the Jebusites began inhabiting it, we do not know. It was known as both Jerusalem and Jebus during the Judges period (Jud.1:8,21;1 Chron 11:4), until David drove the Jebusites out: "Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord saying, "Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?" And the Lord said, "Judah shall go up…Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire." Judges 1:1,8.

Another way to explain this would be to say that these letters were from the Jebusite ruler (but not "king") who still lived in Jerusalem after the initial conquest, prior to, or anytime during the judges period, which would make it more problematic dating the initial conquest by these letters, as the

Jews did not drive out the Canaanites (including the Jebusites in Jerusalem), but lived among them, and only gained possession of the land over a long period of time.

In fact, Jerusalem was not in their control until David took the city in the 7th year of his reign. (2 Sam. 5:5-7) Moreover, the word used here for Abdi-Heba is not the word for king, but "mayor/governor." Merrill states, "But the conquest, contrary to traditional interpretations, was limited to population decimation and displacement, not material destruction, and therefore is discernible barely, if at all, in the archaeological record. The Apiru movement of the Amarna texts may be a reflex of some of the effects of the slightly earlier conquest, but it should certainly not be construed as a Canaanite version of that conquest or of any form of Israel's emergence… The Amarna accounts provide a non-Israelite perspective on the instability occasioned by Israel's failure to follow through on the divine mandate to possess the land:[56]
"As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out, but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day." Josh.15:63.

Judges 19:1,11: "And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel…when they were by Jebus… 'Come I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it.' And his master said unto him, 'We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger that is not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah.'
"2 Sam. 5:6,7 says, "And the king and his men went to Jerusalem, unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land…nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion."

Kiel states, "Joshua had already slain the king of Jerusalem and his four allies after the battle at Gibeon (Josh.10:3,18-26)0, but had not conquered Jerusalem, his capital. This was not done till after Joshua's death, when it was taken by the tribes of Judah and Simeon. Even after this capture, and notwithstanding the fact that it had been set on fire, it did not come into the sole and permanent possession of the Israelites.

After the conquerors had advanced still farther, to make war upon the Canaanites in the mountains, in the Negev, and in the Shephelah (vs.9 sqq.), the Jebusites took it again and rebuilt it, so that in the following age it was regarded by the Israelites as a foreign city (ch. 19:11-12)."[57]

There is also a list from the time of Amenhotep III in the temple of Amon in Nubia. In column 4.a2 is written, "ssw yhw3" which translates to "Yahweh of the land of the Shasu." Shasu is a term used by the Egyptians to describe Bedouins east of the Nile Delta.[58] Gleason Archer has pointed out that one of the Armana letters from the king of Meggido speaks of a leader named "Yashuya" which is close to the spelling of Joshua.[59]

However, Stephen Meyers states, "Cities that are not mentioned in the El Amarna letters are also important to note. Bimson says: The fact that various Canaanite cities important in other periods do not feature in the Amarna correspondence is adequately accounted for by the fact that the incoming Israelites had destroyed them just a few decades before. Cities which do not feature include Gibeon, Jericho, Hebron (?), and Bethel (1981, 227).[60]

What about the tempest stele? The Tempest stele details a catastrophe during the reign of king Ahmos. It is also written first person as though Ahmose witnessed this unusual storm, though all we have of the stela are broken pieces from the temple of Karnak Was this part of the 10 plagues? Was this the Eruption of Mt. Thera? (two separate questions).

The stele reads: “a thick darkness, without the least light spread itself over the Egyptians whereby their sight being obstructed…hail was sent down from heaven and such hail it was as the climate of Egypt had never suffered before…”

Moeller states, "In view of the unusually detailed description of a major climatic event on the Tempest Stela, combined with the shifting chronology, we must now consider the possibility that the Thera eruption had been witnessed by Ahmose himself. Furthermore, the eruption certainly affected a large part of the eastern Mediterranean and would have remained part of an oral tradition that was fresh in the memory of the people for a long time afterwards. But the stela emphasizes the fact that Ahmose himself witnessed the event, which seems to exclude him using a second-hand account."[61]

The eruption of Mt Thera has been said to have been 4-5 times more powerful than Krakatoa, which had worldwide effects for years. This was 540 miles away and occurred when Israel was in Egypt. Some scientists believe this event brought about some of the plagues the year Israel left Egypt; so dating Thera might date the Exodus; except Thera is usually thought to have erupted in the 17th century.

However, the dates have a wide range (1645-1600 BC), and if this range can match with Ahmos' reign, and Thera did cause some of the plagues, that rules out the kings most proposed for the Exodus in the 1400's BC. It also rules in Africanus' statement of a king "in the days of Ahmos" possibly being the one at the time of the Exodus (the start of Ahmos' 25 year reign has been radiocarbon dated (2010) to 1570-1544 BC. [62-69]

The Red Sea Miracle

Ex. 14:30 states: "Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore."

And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,

'Speak to the sons of Israel that they turn and camp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon. You shall camp before *it*, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, They *are* tangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he will follow them. And I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his army, so that the Egyptians may know that I *am* Jehovah. And they did so.' Exo 14:1-4

Ex 14:5 "And the king of Egypt was told that the people fled. And the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people. And they said, 'Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?'

Ex 14:6 And he made his chariot ready, and took his people with him.

Ex 14:7 And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

Ex 14:8 And Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And he pursued the sons of Israel, and the sons of Israel went out with a high hand.

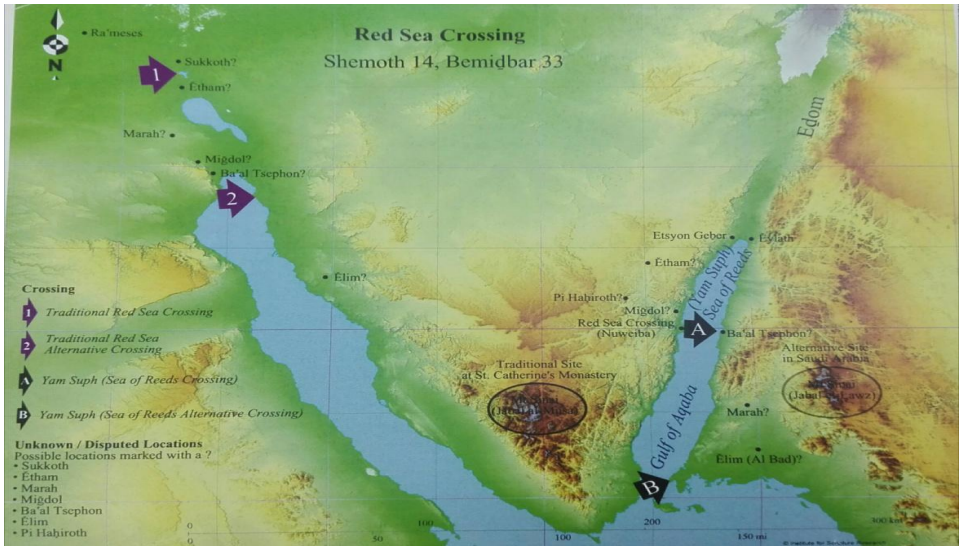
Ex 14:9 But the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army. And they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baal-zephon."

So where is this? Many say this account can determine the spot of the Red sea crossing. Especially revealing is the statement that Pharaoh would think they were 'tangled in the land." So what qualifies for this parameter? Newieba beach on the gulf of Aqaba, has mountains on either side to the entrance from the west; and closes them off to the North. The problem is that one can still travel south-west through a mountain pass from Newieba to escape. Al aldabiya on the Egyptian

side of the gulf of Suez also has a southern way of escape (today's highway 65 route). Another alternative, crossing the Straits of Tiran, however could close them in). The question is, does this have to mean 'completely closed in." Pharaoh thinking the land had tangled them in probably only refers to the mountains on one side and the sea on the other. His army would have had no problem routing them in either scenario.

Also, it has been proposed that Israel did not cross the Red Sea, but a marshy area north of it. This is because in the Hebrew OT, the term for this body of water was 'yom suph' which many say means "reed sea." This is because they say Moses used 'suph'; an Egyptian word for reed. Others say it means 'end sea', which is the Hebrew 'suph' meaning end. The LXX puts "red sea" in the text in place of 'yum suph'; and the Red Sea is what scripture intends to convey to us, as the New Testament writers Stephen and the writer of Hebrews tell us ("eruthros thalassa,"Acts 7:36, Heb.11:29).

D.Schwartz comments:"Secondly, since NT authors in Acts 7:36 and Hebrews 11:29 are using LXX terminology ("Red Sea"), and fail to use the MT (Hebrew) terminology ("Sea of Reeds"), and their writings are under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it appears that God is affirming the choice of terminology. Indeed, it is presumptuous to call what God has affirmed "erroneous."



In saying this, however, it does not follow that the Holy Spirit inspired the LXX, but only those texts placed into the NT under the Spirit's direction. This issue is critical and central! Indeed, those who become so immersed in the minutiae of the language issues can sometimes overlook the larger and essential issues of the theological spectrum.

If the Holy Spirit inspired the NT, then the words He chose (from any source) are exactly what He wanted included in the text. And He chose words, many of them, from the text of the LXX. It should be noted that not everyone agrees "suph" here means "reeds" Some say "end" as in end of the sea. Also some conjecture the original name for this area was "yom Edom": "red sea," so named because it was adjacent to the land of Edom."[1]

In many OT references, it is obvious the term "Red Sea" is referring to the Sea of Aqaba, and no other body of water. Ex. 23:31 states, "And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river." See also Numbers 21:4, Judges 11:16-22, and Jer.49:20-1. I Kings also tells us that Edom bordered 'Yom suph.' Edom borders the gulf of Aqaba, and the sea of the Philistines is the Mediterranean.

1Ki 9:26 says, "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom." However, historians tell us that both gulfs are referred to in ancient times as the red sea. So the key question is: "Does the red sea in the exodus crossing account have to be the same gulf as the red sea in other bible references? If it does, the gulf of Aqaba is the only other possibility.

It is true that many modern experts support the theory of a crossing in the lower region of the Bitter Lakes(1), which starts about 25 km north of Suez. This concept, however, is accompanied by a denial of the miraculous nature of the crossing (holding that the crossing was only through a pond or swamp) or by the idea that the northern end of the Red Sea formerly reached the region of the Bitter Lakes and that the the waters there were much deeper at that time; although **archaeological evidence indicates that there has been very little change in the water level there since ancient times** (since 1869, the Suez canal runs through there).
Kitchen suggested that the Reed Sea terminology might have been used by the ancients for all the bodies of water in the series of reedy lakes that ran the full north-south length of the isthmus (2003:262). By extension, it was also applied to the last of these bodies of water—the Gulf of Suez.

Num 33:8 And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.
Num 33:9 And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there.
Num 33:10 And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea.
Num 33:11 And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin

Albert Barnes says of this locale: "*Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea." Ex.14:2*

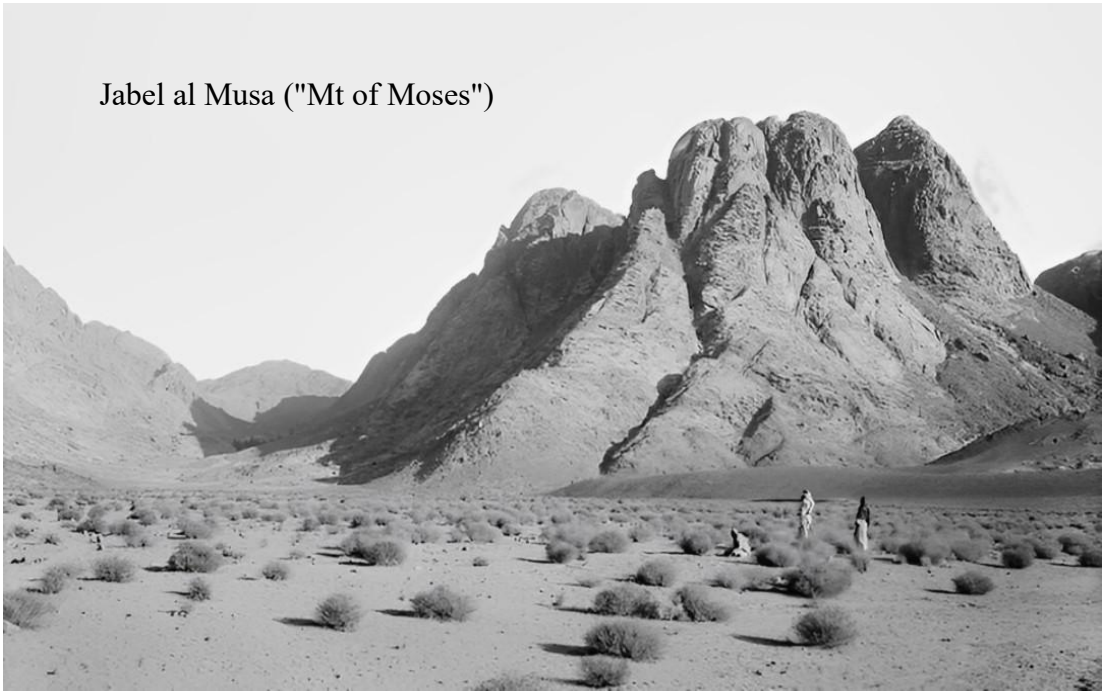
Pi-hahiroth - The place is generally identified with Ajrud, a fortress with a very large well of good water, situated at the foot of an elevation commanding the plain which extends to Suez, at a distance of four leagues. The journey from Etham might occupy two, or even three days.

Migdol - A tower, or fort, the "Maktal" of Egyptian monuments; it is probably to be identified with Bir Suweis, about two miles from Suez.

Baal-zephon - The name under which the Phoenicians, who had a settlement in Lower Egypt at a very ancient period, worshipped their chief Deity. There can be no doubt it was near Kolsum, or Suez.Pi-hahiroth: their headquarters being between Bir Suweis and the sea opposite to Baal-Zephon. *For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.* Ex.14:3
They are entangled ... - The original intention of Moses was to go toward Palestine by the wilderness: when that purpose was changed by God's direction and they moved southwards, Pharaoh, on receiving information, was of course aware that they were completely shut in, since the waters of the Red Sea then extended to the Bitter Lakes. It is known that the Red Sea at some remote period extended considerably further toward the north than it does at present."

For this reason, the location suggested by older experts (2) still seems to be the one that best fits the requirements of biblical history. Pi-Hairoth is evidently a site on the narrow plain that runs along the southeastern foothills of Jebel… The sea bed in this region declines very gradually on both sides due to sandbars that extend for 3 km on either side. The maximum water depth near the middle of this trajectory is about 15 m.(50') The distance from one bank to the other is about 10 km.[2]

Jabel al Musa ("Mt of Moses")



Sarah Ryan states: "…site (1) places the crossing at a little, shallow, swamp like body of water, right outside of the ancient Egypt boundaries. Given the size of this body of water, the close location to the Egyptian border, the lack of any archaeological evidence, and the fact that this is not part of the Red Sea; it is easy to dismiss this as a possibility.[5]

In fact, the only reason it is proposed is because crossing the depth of water in the gulf of Aqaba requires a spectacular miracle of both depth and terrain. (2800' in middle at Neweiba). Skeptics point to the wind holding the walls of water up, as no wind could hold up any walls of water on either side.

Ex. 14:22 states, "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." God used a "wind" to do something a natural wind cannot do. As Jason Derouchie says, "This isn't about wind getting glory; this is about God getting glory."[6]

After crossing the Red Sea, Israel came to the wilderness of Shur, and 3 days later camped at Marah and Elim. Ex.15:22-27. John Gill says "according to Aben Ezra, they stayed but one day at Marah. Elim, as a late traveller (r) says, was upon the northern skirts of the desert of Sin"[3]
The traditional Christian Orthodox identification of Mount Sinai as Jabal Musa - one of the peaks at the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula, would imply that the wilderness of Sin was probably the narrow plain of el-Markha, which stretches along the eastern shore of the Red Sea for several miles toward the promontory of Ras Mohammed.[4]

The next possible location (2) is located on the Red Sea near the tip of the Gulf of Suez, about 20 miles from Rameses, and so a shorter distance, or further down the gulf by the mountains. A three day journey with three stops and 2-3 million people would fit here.

A key question here is: How long did it take them to reach the red sea?
Exodus 15:22-3 states, "So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah." This was just after they crossed the Red Sea. Barnes comments on this: "three days - The distance between Ayoun Musa and Huwara, the first spot where any water is found on the route, is 33 geographical miles. The whole district is a tract of sand, or rough gravel."[7]

So they traveled 11 mi./day after crossing the red sea; and as they needed to make haste to find water, this was probably at the same speed as before. Even doubling this speed would not get them even near the gulf of Aqaba before Pharaoh would have caught up with them. Normal travel time in the wilderness is much less though. Bryant Wood says that pastoralists traveling with their flocks can go no more than 10 km (6 mi) per day.[8]

In Ex. 8:27 Moses tells Pharaoh that Israel will "go three days journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as He shall command us.' And Pharaoh said, 'I will let you go that you may sacrifice to the lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away.'" Note that they stopped 3 times: at Succoth, Etham, and Migdol by the Sea. Many commentators take the three stops to refer to three days of travel. *Kiel comments, "*The starting-point was *Raëmses*, from which they proceeded to *Succoth* (Exo_12:37), thence to *Etham* at the end of the desert (Exo_13:20), and from that by a curve to *Hachiroth*, opposite to the Red Sea, from which point they passed through the sea (Exo_14:2, Exo_14:21.). Now, if we take these words simply as they stand, Israel touched the border of the desert of Arabia by the second day, and on the third day reached the plain of Suez and the Red Sea."[8a]

Note how soon the king decides to pursue them. Ex.14:5-6 "And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him."

This sounds like he gave them 3 days, but expected them to return immediately(Ex.14: 5-6). It does not sound like they got very far. Surely, Pharaoh would not have waited long to exact revenge after his son's death. Barnes states, "Up to the time when that information reached Pharaoh both he and his people understood that the Israelites would return after keeping a festival in the district adjoining Etham. From Etham the intelligence would be forwarded by the commander of the garrison to Rameses in less than a day, and the cavalry, a highly-disciplined force, would be ready for immediate departure.'[8b]

One proposed route to the Red Sea, Goshen to Newiba, is 209 miles; but even at 11mile/day, this would have taken 19 days: too long for this rendering of the account to be likely (or even longer 250m. to straits of Tiran). Others say they traveled constantly with no rest, even miraculously fast, because of God's Pillar cloud and pillar of fire leading both by day and night. But nowhere does the text intimate this meant no rest, or that all the people received supernatural endurance. In fact, scripture tells us that they stopped 3 times.

Gill comments, "Jarchi…says, they went out with them the three days' journey, but the Israelites not returning to Egypt (as expected), they tell Pharaoh of it the fourth day… these reported to Pharaoh:that the people fled; that under a pretence of going three days' journey into the wilderness, to serve and sacrifice to the Lord, they were about to make their escape out of the land"[9] "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us. And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away:" Ex.8:28

Hebrew tradition says the entire time from leaving Egypt to completely crossing the sea took 7 days. But this is based on their theology of the flight being as long as their passover week later instituted (after God gave them the tablets at Mt.Sinai, and they made the tabernacle,Lev.3:5-8), and has no scriptural basis. Josephus says, "on the 3rd day they came to a place called Beelzeophon on the Red Sea." (Ant.2.15.1) Ex.13:20 tells us they went from Succoth to Etham to Pihahiroth, where they crossed the sea.

Eames adds, "The Bible describes three separate encampments along the way to the Red Sea (verse 20; Numbers 33:5-8). The Bible states that it took roughly two months to reach the territory of Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1, Numbers 33:3). 400 kilometers in a handful of days—80 kilometers in two months? The math just does not add up.

The Bible also describes the Israelites "pitching" in only three different locations before the sea crossing—but it describes them pitching in eight different locations after it, on the way to Mount Sinai (Numbers 33:5-15). Which route fits better?

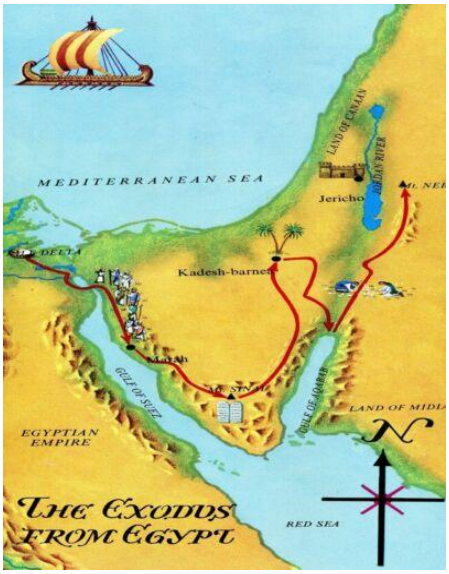
Further, it is only after the Red Sea crossing that the Israelites begin to complain about water (Exodus 17:1-2). Why only in the short stretch from Aqaba to al-Lawz? Why no mention of water during the massive 400-kilometer stretch across the Sinai? And it is only after the Red Sea crossing that God starts to give the Israelites manna (Exodus 16).
Why only in the final short stretch? Why not on the 400-kilometer hike? But these events do fit with the long desert journey deep into the Sinai Peninsula, following the short journey to a crossing at the Gulf of Suez."[10]

Creation Ministries adds: "All we know for certain is the starting point. Yet, we know they had doubled back (Exodus 14:2) and become trapped between Pharaoh's army and the sea.
After marching for two days, the Israelites could have made it to the tip of the Gulf of Suez. This would also have given enough time for dispatch riders to reach Pharaoh and for him to chase down the Israelites camped on the shore. Among the Red Sea/Reed Sea/Yam Suph crossing options, Suez is the shallowest about 10 m (33 ft) at Adabiya, with a gentle slope.(or the large beach protrusion suitable for holding 2-3M people, Attaka beach, 7km south of this).

In fact, the entire Gulf of Suez is shallower than the shallowest possible crossing point in the Gulf of Aqaba. Adabiya would be easy to get to from Rameses, and if they went around the western side, they would be "hemmed in" by a mountain to the south.

The crossing is only about 9 km (< 6 miles), but there is some contention about what the Egyptians called the land on the other side. Some claim they would still be in "Egypt" if they crossed at Adabiya.
Others point out that the forts just east of the delta are the border of Egypt, which is why they had forts there, and the Sinai Peninsula was designated as 'foreign land,'even though they had mining operations there.

If this is the case, the entire Sinai Peninsula was not considered part of Egypt. The sea bed in this region declines very gradually on both sides due to sandbars that extend for 3 km on either side. The maximum water depth near the middle of this trajectory(East of Al Adabiya) is about 15 m, but mostly 10m.[11]



What are the boundaries of the Red Sea? Struse says: "Both gulfs and the main sea were known from antiquity as the Red Sea. Identifying Elim's 12 springs/fountains with Ayun Musa's 12 artesian springs, the Red Sea has to be the Gulf of Suez, this also fits the statement that the locusts IN ALL OF EGYPT were dumped into the Red Sea by a west wind, as Egypt extends from the Delta to Syene (present day Aswan) and the Gulf of Suez parallels most of Egypt's east side. Finally, after camping at Kadesh-Barnea in the Negev, Israel camps at Ezion-Geber, a port on the Red Sea in Solomon's time, making it Red Sea number Three."[12]

Bonell states, "However, it seems like Moses brought the children of Israel into the Wilderness of Shur AFTER they crossed the Red Sea. Shur seems to be located west of Kadesh-Barnea toward Egypt. (Ge 16:7; Ge 20:1; Ge 25:18; Ex 15:22; 1Sa 15:7; 1Sa 27:8). Maybe they crossed the Gulf of Suez or thereabouts, and then went by land into Midian where Mt. Sinai is located in Arabia."[13]

The evidence for Aqaba: There are two different possible crossing locations on the Gulf of Aqaba (A and B). Site A is located about half way down the gulf at Nuweiba Beach. Nuweiba is short for "Nuwayba'al al Muzayyimah" meaning "waters of Moses". Site B is located at the bottom tip of the Gulf. Either of these two locations would put Mt. Sinai in Saudi Arabia (ancient Midian), which agrees with Galatians 4:25, and many archaeological discoveries.[14]

If you visit Nuweiba Beach you will see that both ends are bordered by steep cliffs,though there is another mountain pass SW through the mountains from the beach. Would Pharaoh have said, "They are entangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in" (Ex. 14:3)? He would have had to send 2 armies, one from the northern pass and one from the southern pass to shut them in.

Josephus said, "Now when the Egyptians had overtaken the Hebrews, they also seized the passages by which they imagined the Hebrews might fly, shutting them up between inaccessible precipices and the sea. For there was on each side a ridge of mountains which terminated at the sea which were impassible by reason of their roughness and obstructed their flight."[15] How Josephus knew this was so is hard to say.

Throughout the Gulf of Aqaba, the depth is about 5,000 feet, except at these locations. At Neweiba Beach, there is a 10-mile-long and a ¼ to ½ mile wide sand plateau which joins the two countries together. This sand bridge has a fairly level 7 degree slope on the west side, a sharp incline on the right, and has a depth of 2600+ feet (half mile) in the middle. Quite the climb!

Site B is the straits of Tiran. It has 4 reefs between the shores and is 19km across with a maximum depth of about 205m, but very rough bottom, and too steep, a 40 degree slope, on the eastern side.

Bryant Wood says, ”Strabo, writing his Geography at the beginning of the first century AD, said, “There is another canal which empties into the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf near the city Arsinoe, a city which some call Cleopatris [modern day Suez City GF]. It flows through the Bitter Lakes, as they are called” (17.25; LCL 8:77). Strabo makes a distinction between the Red Sea, also called the Arabian Gulf, and the Bitter Lakes. The Bitter Lakes are never called the Red Sea.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Yam Suph could refer to either the Gulf of Suez or the Gulf of Akaba/Eilat. The context determines the location. For example, Exodus 10:19 says, “And the LORD turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt” (NKJV). As J. Rea points out, the “strong west wind” should be translated “sea wind.” In Egypt, the sea winds are from north-northwest to the south (1975: 1:572). According to Young's Lexicon index, "yom" is translated "west" 70 times, and "sea"300" times in scripture, so this is very possible.

Since the locusts covered “the face of the whole earth [land of Egypt]” (10:15; NKJV), there would need to be a large body of water to destroy the locusts. The Gulf of Suez is what is in view. Exodus 13:18, 15:4, and 15:22, and Numbers 33:10 refer to the Gulf of Suez. This location is also where the early Christian pilgrims place the Red Sea crossing (Wilkinson 1981: 100, 101, 205–207).

On the other hand, 1 Kings 9:26 says, “King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom” (NKJV). This is clearly referring to the Gulf of Akaba/Eilat. Judges 11:16 and Jeremiah 49:20 and 49:21 are most likely referring to this gulf as well.

More than likely, when the Israelites camped by the sea, it would have been on the plains at the north shore of the Gulf of Suez between Suez City and the impressive mountain to the west, Jebel ‘Ataqa. Robinson describes this area as a “desert plain…composed for the most part of hard gravel” (1977: 70). There is adequate space for the tribes of Israel…

One plausible location for Mt. Sinai is at Jebel Sin Bishar in west central Sinai. If that is the case, the Red Sea crossing would best be located at a natural land bridge that goes east-west across the northern Gulf of Suez to the east of Jebel Ataqa.”[16] (Please read his entire article)
As for the miracle of the crossing, Exodus 15 says, ” Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them:

they sank into the bottom as a stone… And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea… Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters."

Attaka beach

Kiel notes, Ps.18:15: 'And by the breath of Thy nostrils' (i.e., the strong east wind sent by God, which is described as the blast of the breath of His nostrils; cf. Psa_18:16) the waters heaped themselves up (piled themselves up, so that it was possible to go between them like walls); the flowing ones stood like a heap" (נֵד cumulus; it occurs in Jos_3:13, Jos_3:16, and Psa_33:7; Psa_78:13, where it is borrowed from this passage. מֹזְלִים: the running, flowing ones; a poetic epithet applied to waves, rivers, or brooks, Psa_78:16, Psa_78:44; Isa_44:3). "The waves congealed in the heart of the sea:" a poetical description of the piling up of the waves like solid masses." [17] ("congealed" Hebrew: 'Kaw faw': to thicken).

Gill comments on God's previous wind: **"And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind**,.... He turned the wind the contrary way it before blew; it was an east wind that brought the locusts, but now it was changed into a west wind, or "a wind of the sea," of the Mediterranean sea; a wind which blew from thence, which lay to the west of Egypt, as the Red sea did to the east of it, to which the locusts were carried by the wind as follows: which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea;and as it is usual for locusts to be brought by winds, so to be carried away with them, and to be let fall into seas, lakes, and pools, and there perish.[18]

Clark adds**, "A mighty strong west wind -** רוח ים ruach yam, literally the wind of the sea; the wind that blew from the Mediterranean Sea, which lay north-west of Egypt, which had the Red Sea on the east. Here again God works by natural means; he brought the locusts by the east wind, and took them away by the west or north-west wind,
which carried them to the Red Sea where they were drowned. Clarke[19] (Young's index lexicon says yam is translated west 70 times, and sea 284 times).

Jamieson adds, "Suppose a mere ebb tide caused by the wind, raising the water to a great height on *one side,* still as there was not only "dry land," but, according to the tenor of the sacred narrative, a wall on the right hand and on the left [Ex._14:22], it would be impossible on the hypothesis of such a natural cause to rear the wall on the *other.* The idea of divine interposition, therefore, is

imperative; and, assuming the passage to have been made at Mount Attakah, or at the mouth of Wady Tawarik, an *east* wind would cut the sea in that line."[20]

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" In 2Ch_3:2 וַיָּחֶל לִבְנוֹת is repeated in order to fix the time of the building. In 1Ki_6:1 the time is fixed by its relation to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. בַּשֵּׁנִי, which the older commentators always understood of the second day of the month, is strange. Elsewhere the day of the month is always designated by the cardinal number with the addition of לַחֹדֶשׁ or יוֹם, the month having been previously given. Berth. therefore considers בַּשֵּׁנִי to be a gloss which has come into the text by a repetition of הַשֵּׁנִי, since the lxx and Vulg. have not expressed it."
Pulpit Commentary. Donald Spence Jones, 1880:
In the second day. The word "day" as italicized in our Authorized Version type is of course not found in the Hebrew text. Several manuscripts fail also to show the other words of this clause, viz. "In the second;" and that they are probably spurious derives confirmation from the fact that neither the Arabic nor Syriac Versions, nor the Septuagint nor Vulgate translations, produce them. In the second month, in the fourth year. Reading the verse, therefore, as though it began thus, the most interesting but doubtful question of fixing an exact chronology for what preceded Solomon's reign is opened. In
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I find it interesting that when C.B. DeMille was making the 10 Commandments, though the liberal scholars advising him then believed the red sea crossing shallow; he made it as it would have looked from the Gulf of Suez locale(~30-50' high water); as indeed this was the backdrop for this scene.

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